A

Relation

Of the Fearful Estate OF *FRANCIS SPIRA*

In the Year 1548.

Compiled by *Nath. Bacon*, Esq.

Prov. 14. 14.

The Backslider in heart shall be filled with his own wayes.

Boston in *New-England*, Printed for *Samuel Green*. 1682.

THE PREFACE.

For truth of this History *ensuing, besides circumstances of Place, Person, Time, Occasion, so exactly observed, I refer my self to the Relation of those Godly Men, who in several Languages have manifested to the World the several passages thereof: and although I am not ignorant, that at the first they were not only not credited, but also discredited and slandred, by such as found them to be a Blur to the* Roman *Profession, yet they lost not their lustre thereby; but being acquitted by many Compurgators of several Nations, and some of the* Romish *Religion, being all of them Spectators of this Tragedy, it occasioned not only a further manifestation and confirmation of the Truth, but also a large and more frequent confluence, to see that which they had formerly only heard of. This partly appeareth out of the succeeding Story: but more fully out of an Apology written by* Ver-

gerius, *Bishop of* Justinople, *who was accused for dispersing the fame of his Example to the stain of Popery; in which Apology to* N. Rottan *Suffragan of* Padua, *is shortly and plainly declared, what was said, what was done, and who were present. If that it be demanded, what moved me to compile this Treatise of* Spira, *tell them that it should teach fear and reverence; and indeed among all those that come to see him, few or none return unshaken.* Vergerius *in his first Epistle saith, I would fain go see him again, but I exceedingly fear and tremble; and in his Apologie saith, it is such a rare Example, as I would wildingly go to the furthest parts of the World to hear or see the like. The Lady* Jane *to her Fathers* Chaplain (*that had fallen into* Spira's *sin*) *saith Remember the lamentable Estate of* Spira. *I acknowledge that there hath been formerly a Book published in our Mother Tongue, concerning this Subject; but as far as I can learn (for I could never yet obtain any of them) it was nothing so large and various as this present Treatise, and as I have heard, a Translation of only one of the Tractates from whence I have gathered this present Discourse in part. Concerning my Care and Fidelity in this business, it is such, as I may truely say without changing of colour, that there is not one Sentence of all this work attributed unto the person of* Spira, *but it hath its Warrant, either from the Epistles of* Vergerius *and* Gribauldus,

bauldus, *Professors of the Law at* Padua, *or from the Discourses of* Henry Scringer *a* Scotch Man, Sigismund Gelons *a* Transilvanian, *and* Mart. Bocha *a Divine of* Basil; *neither have I taken any other liberty then as a Relation to weave the foresaid Discourses one within another, so as those which under several Writers were before counted several, are now by my endeavours reduced into one intire History, connexed by due succession of time and occasion, as punctually as could be aimed at, by the circumstances noted in the Writings of those holy and learned Men before named.*

N. B.

TO THE AUTHOR and READER OF THIS HISTORY.

SOme scattered parcels of this Story lay
In Foreign Papers; which hadst not found a way
Thus to collect, had { been obvious prey, / Never seen the day.

Reader, wouldst see how sinning against the (light
Will quench, and leave the soul in a sad night
Of discontent. Come hither *Reader* then, look (here,
And learn light-quenching sins to fear.
Reader, wouldst see the comfort breathing (Spirit
To grieve, what cursless grief it doth demerit?
Come hither then, look here.

Here see a Soul that's all despair; a Man
All Hell: a Spirit all wound; who can
A wounded Spirit bear?

Reader

Reader would'ſt ſee (what may'ſt thou never
feel)
Deſpair, Racks, Torments, Whips of burning
Steel?
Come then, look here,

Behold this man, this furnace, in whoſe heart
Sin hath created Hells: Oh in each part
What flames appear!
His thoughts all ſtings, words ſwords, Brim-
ſtone his breath,
His ſight flames, wiſhes Curſes, Life a Death:
A thouſand deaths live in him, he not dead,
A breathing courſe in living ſcalding lead:
And yet he lives our Monument to tell
How black are quenched lights;
Quencht joyes are double ſtrights,
Black dayes are double nights;
Heaven taſted, loſt, a double Hell.

I have call'd thee *Reader*, pray ſo be,
Read this, that others read not thee.

Legas Hiſtoriam
Ne fias Hiſtoria.

M. N.

Extra-

EXtraordinary Examples of Divine Justice, GOD never intended for a nine dayes wonder; else would he, whom he Exemplified *Lots* Wife, have turned her into a Statue of melting Snow, not of lasting Salt; which stood, as *Josephus* tells us, till his Age, after the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and as some Travellers report, till at this day, *Ut quoadam hominibus præstaret condimentum, quo sapiant unde illud caveatur exemplum*: Aug. de Civit. Dei Lib 16. Cap. 30. for a season against corruption, a preservative against Apostacy. This Tragedy, when fresh and new, was the conversion and confirmation of sundry Worthies. *Vergerius*, a daily spectator thereof, forsaking a rich Bishoprick of *Justinopolis*, and tents of *Antichrist*, went to *Basil*, and died a worthy Protestant: many Nations had eye witnesses of their own Students then in the University of *Padua*, who penned the Story, the Copies whereof are frequently revived, our *English* ones were very defective, and now worn out of shops and hands: sundry Manuscripts of this abroad, imperfect: which moved me to compare this Labour of a worthy Gentleman

(who

(who faithfully tranſlated it out of *Italian*, *French*, and *Dutch* Letters) with the *Latin* of *Cœlius Secundus*, *Curio*, *Matthæus Gribaldus*, Profeſſors of the Civil Law in *Padua*: *Sigiſmond Gelons* a *Tranſylvanian*, *Henricus Scotus*, all daily Viſitors of *Spira*, and find it accord with them. Touching *Spira*'s perſon I find moſt learned VVriters do incline to the right and hopeful hand; moved by his ſweet, humble, and charitable ſpeeches; ſome few deſperate ones excepted, that fell from him in ſome little agonies, which kept him faſting and watching about ſix Moneths ſpace, eating nothing but what was forced down his throat. The ſum of *Calvins* and *Borrhaus* their counſels is, (who write largely of the uſe of this patern) that all learn to take heed of backſliding, which Gods Soul abhorrs, and not to dally with Conſcience, an Hell on Earth, if juſtly incenſed; more to be feared than the Spaniſh Inquiſition, or all the Strappadoes and Torments in the VVorld; and to take heed of *Spira*'s principal Errors, which were, to diſpute with Satan over buſily in time of weakneſs, eſpecially to reaſon, and conclude from preſent ſenſe, to Gods paſt Reprobation, and future Damnation; both which is hard, if poſſible for any man to determine in his own, much more in other caſes.

So

So commending thee to his grace, who is able to eſtabliſh thee to the end, I bid thee farewel, and hope well, while the ſpace of Grace laſteth: *Dum Spiras, ſpera*; ſo mayeſt thou take good and no hurt, by the reading of this terrible Example.

ARE

A RELATION Of the Fearful Eſtate of *Francis Spira.*

IN the Year, 1548. when the Glorious Son of the Goſpel was but newly riſen in *Europe*, in the dayes of the Reign of *Edward*, the ſixth of that Name, King of *ENGLAND*, in the Territory, and under the Juriſdiction of the City of *Venice*, being the very border of *Italy*, in the Town of *Cittadella*, lived one *Francis Spira*, a Civil Lawyer, an Advocate of great rank and eſteem, being of known Learning and Eloquence, of great Experience, of carriage circumſpect and ſevere, his Speech grave and com-

composed, his countenance sharp and austere, every way befitting that Authority whereunto he was advanced, endowed with outward blessings of Wife and eleven Children, and wealth in abundance. VVhat his worst parts were, I have no other warrant than his own words, which (if not tainted overmuch with the bitterness of a desperate mind, and bearing a countenance rather of passion than of sober confession) may seem to add a period to all further commendations.

I was (saith he) *excessively covetous of Money, and accordingly applied my self to get by injustice, corrupting justice by deceit, inventing tricks to delude justice; good Causes I either defended deceitfully, or sold them to the Aaversary perfidiously; ill Causes I maintained with all my might; I wittingly opposed the known truth; and the trust committed unto me, I either betrayed or perverted.*

Thus having worn out fourty four years, or thereabouts, and the news of the new, or rather newly revived Opinions of *Luther* coming into those parts, represented an object of novelty unto him; who being as desirous to know, as he was famous for knowledge, suffered not these wandring Opinions to pass unexamined; but searching into the Scriptures and into all Books of Controversie that he could get, both old and new, and finding more

then

hen Fame or Opinion, he began to taſte their nature ſo well, as he entertains, loves, and wns them at length; and with ſuch zeal, as e became a Profeſſor, yea a Teacher of them, rſt to his Wife, Children, and Family, and ſter to his Friends, and familiar acquaintance, nd in compariſon, ſeemed to neglect all other ffairs; intending ever to preſs this main oint, that *We muſt wholly, and only depend on he free and unchangeable love of GOD in the Death of Chriſt, as the only ſure way to Salvation*: and this was the ſum of all his diſcourſe, nd this continued for the ſpace of ſix years, r thereabouts, even ſo long as this fire could eep it ſelf within private walls; but at length t brake forth into publick Meetings, ſo as the hole Province of *Padua* dawned by the luſtre hereof. The Clergy finding the trade of heir Pardons to decay, and their Purgatory o wax cold, began to beſtir themſelves; gloſng their actions, firſt with calumnious aſperions upon the whole profeſſion; then more lainly ſtriking at *Spira* with grievous accuſaion: And to effect their purpoſe, ſome proſe labour, others favour, ſome advice, others aintenance; all joyn to divide, either his ul from his body, or both from God.

Now was *John Caſa*, the Popes Legate, reident at *Venice*, being by birth a *Florentine*, one that wanted neither malice againſt thoſe

of his way, nor craftineſs to effect his malicious purpoſes; to them theſe men repair without cries againſt *Spira*, that he was the Man that condemned the received Rights of the Church, deiured the Eccleſiaſticel power, and ſcandalized the policy thereof: one of no mean rank, being a man of accou t and authority, and thereunto learned in the Scriptures elegant in ſpeech, and in one word a dangerous *Lutheran*, having alſo many Diſciples, and therefore not to be deſpiſed.

At this began the *Legate* to caſt his eye on the terrible alteration that lately had hapned in *Germany*: where, by the means of one only *Luther*, the Romiſh Religion had ſuffered ſuch a blow, as that it could neither be cured by diſſimulation nor defended by power; but the Clergy muſt either mend their manners, or loſe their dignities. On the other ſide, when he ſaw how propenſe the common people, inhabiting in the bordering Country of *Italy*, were to entertain thoſe new Opinions, now thought it no time to diſpute or perſwade, but with ſpeed repairs to the *Senate*, and procures authority from them to ſend to *Spira*.

Spira by this time had conſidered with himſelf of the nature of his courage, how evident and notorious it was, and therefore ſubject to be envied by ſuch, as neither liked his Perſon nor Religion; he perceived that his Opinions were

were neither retired, nor speculative but such as aimed at the overthrow of the *Romish* Faction, and a change of policy; and that his Enemies wanted neither power nor occasion to call him to an account in publick, when he must either *Apostatize*, and shamefully give his former life, yea, his own conscience, the lie, or endure the utmost malice of his deadly Enemies; or forsake his Wife, Children, Friends, Goods, Authority, yea his Dear Countrey, and betake himself to a forreign people, there to endure a thousand miseries, that do continually wait upon a voluntary exile.

Being thus distracted, and tossed in the restless VVaves of doubt, without guide to trust to, or Heaven to fly to for succour, on the suddain, *GOD*'S Spirit assisting he felt a calm, and began to discourse with himself, in this manner.

Why wandrest thou thus in uncertainties, unhappy Man? cast away fear, put on thy shield, the shield of Faith: Where is thy wonted courage by goodness, thy constancy? remember that Christs glory lies at the stake: suffer thou without fear, and he will defend thee, he will tell thee what thou shalt answer; he can beat down all danger, bring thee out of Prison, raise thee from the dead: consider Peter *in a Dungeon, the* Martyrs *in the fire; if thou mak'st a good confession,*

thou mayeſt indeed go to Priſon, or Death, but an eternal reward in heaven remains for thee: what haſt thou in this world comparable to eternal life, to everlaſting happineſs? If thou doſt otherwiſe, think of the ſcandal, (common people live by example, thinking whatever is done is well done,) fear the loſs of peace and joy, fear hell death, and eternal wrath: or if the fleſh be ſo ſtrong, as to cauſe thee to doubt of the iſſue, fly thy Countrey, get thee away, though never ſo far, rather then deny the Lord of life.

Now was *Spira* in reaſonable quiet, being reſolved to yield to theſe weighty Reaſons. Yet holding it wiſdome to examine all things, he conſults alſo with fleſh and blood: thus the battel doth renew, and the fleſh begins in this manner;

Be well adviſed fond Man, conſider reaſons on both ſides, and then judge: how canſt thou thus overwene thine own ſufficiency, as thou neither regardeſt the Examples of thy Progenitors, nor the judgements of the whole Church? doſt thou not conſider, what miſery this thy raſhneſs will bring thee unto? thou ſhalt loſe all thy ſubſtance, gotten with ſo great care and travel, thou ſhalt undergo the moſt exquiſite torments that malice it ſelf can deviſe, thou ſhalt be counted an Heretick of all, and to cloſe up all, *thou ſhalt die* ſhamefully. *What thinkeſt thou of the Loathſome ſtinking Dungeon, the bloody axe, the burning*

Fagot?

agot? *Are they delightful? Be wiſe at length,* nd keep thy life and honour: thou mayeſt live to much good to good men, as God commands thee: hou mayeſt be an ornament to thy Country, and ut caſe the Countries loſs would be of ſmall e- uem with thee, wilt thou bring thy friends alſo nto danger? thou haſt begotten Children, wilt hou now cut their throats, & inhumanely butcher hem, who may in time bring honour to their Coun- rey, glory to God, help and furtherance to his hurch? go to the Legat, weak man, freely con- ſs thy fault, and help all theſe miſeries.

Thus did the cares of this VVorld, and the eceitfulneſs of Riches, choak the good Seed hat was formerly ſown: ſo as fearing, he ints, and yields unto the alluremerts of this reſent VVorld; and being thus blinded he oes to the Legat at *Venice*, and ſalutes him ith this news.

Having for theſe divers years entertained an inion concerning ſome Articles of Faith, con- ary to the Orthodox and received judgement of he Church, and uttered many things againſt the uthority of the Church of Rome, *and the uni- erſal Biſhop, I humbly acknowledge my fault nd error, and my folly in miſleading others: I herefore yield my ſelf in all Obedience, to the ſu- peam Biſhop, into the boſome of the Church of ome, never to depart again from the Tradition nd Decrees of the holy* See: *I am heartily ſorry*

for what is past: and I humbly beg Pardon for so great an offence.

The *Legat* perceiving *Spira* to faint, he pursues him to the utmost: he causes a Recitation of all his Errors to be drawn in writing, together with the Confession annexed to it. And commands *Spira* to subscribe his Name there, which accordingly he did: then the *Legate* commands him to return to his own Town, and there to declare this confession of his, and to acknowledge the whole Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, to be holy and true, and to abjure the Opinions of *Luther* and other such Teachers, as False and Heretical; *Man knows the beginning of six, but who bounds the issues thereof?* *Spira* having once lost footing goes down amain, he cannot say nor gainsay the *Legate*, but promiseth to accomplish his whole will and pleasure: he soon addresseth himself for his Journey: and being onward in the way, bethinks himself of the large spoils he had brought away, from the conflict with the *Legate*; what glorious testimony he had given of his great Faith, and constancy in Christs cause: and to be plain, how impiously he had denied Christ, and his Gospel at *Venice*; and what he promised to do further in his own Countrey: and thus partly with fear, and partly with shame being confounded, he thought he heard a voice speaking unto him, in this manner,

Spira

Spira, *What dost thou here? whither goest thou? hast thou, unhappy Man, given thy handwriting to the Legate at* Venice? *yet see thou dost not seal it in thy own Countrey. Dost thou indeed think eternal Life so mean, as that thou preferrest this present life before it? dost thou well in preferring Wife and Children before Christ? is the windy applause of the People, better indeed than the Glory of God? and the possession of this Worlds good more dear to thee, than the Salvation of thine own soul? is the small use of a moment of time more desirable, than eternal wrath is dreadful? think with thy self, what Christ endured for thy sake; is it not equal, thou shouldst suffer somewhat for him? Remember Man, that the sufferings of this present life, are not comparable to the glory that shall be revealed. If thou sufferest with him, thou shalt also Reign with him: thou canst not answer for what thou hast already done; nevertheless the gate of mercy is not quite shut: take heed that thou heapest not sin upon sin, lest thou repent when it will be too late.*

Now was *Spira* in a Wilderness of doubt, not knowing which way to turn him, nor what to do; yet being arrived in his own Countrey and amongst his Friends, what he had done and what he had further promised to do, and how the terror of God on the one side, and the terror of this World on the other side, did continually rack him; and therefore he

desired of them advice in this so doubtful a case: His friends, upon small deliberation answered, that it was requisite he should take heed that he did not in any wise betray his wife and Children, and all his Friends into danger, seeing, that by so small a matter as the reciting of a little Schedule, which might be done in less space then half an hour, he might both free himself from present danger, and preserve many that depend upon him; adding moreover, that he could get no credit in relenting from that which he had already in greatest part performed before the *Legate* at *Venice*; and that in the perfect accomplishing thereof, little or no discretion could arise, more then what by the former action already he had sustained: on the other side, if he did not perform his promise made to the *Legate*, he could neither discharge himself of the shame which he had already incurred, nor avoid far more heavy and insupportable injuries, then probably he should have endured, if he had persisted obstinately in his former Opinions.

This was the last blow of the battle: and *Spira* utterly overcome, goes to the *Prætor*, and profers to perform his promise made to the *Legate*, who in the mean time, had taken order to have all things ready, and had sent the instrument of abjuration signed by *Spira*,

to

to the Prætor, by the hands of a certain Priest. All that night the miserable Man wares out with restless cares, without any minute of rest, the next morning being come, he gets up, and being ready, he desperately enters into the publick Congregation, where Mass being finished, in the presence of friends and Enemies, and of the whole Assembly being in estimation near two thousand people, yea and of *Heaven* it self, he recites that infamous abjuration, word for word as it was written; it being done he was fined at thirty pieces of gold, which he presently paid, five whereof were given to the Priest that brought the abjuration, the other twenty five were imployed towards the making of of a *Shrine* to put the *Eucharist* in, then was he sent home restored to his Dignities, Goods, Wife, and Children: No sooner was he departed, but he thought he heard a direful voice, saying to him, *Thou wicked wretch, thou hast denied me, thou hast renounced the Covenant of thy obedience, thou hast broken thy vow; hence Apostate, bear with thee the sentence of thy eternal Damnation*: he trembling and quaking in body and mind, fell down in a swound: relief was at hand for the body, but from that time forward he never found any peace or ease of mind, but continuing in unceasant torments, he protested that he was captived under the revenging hand of the great

great God, that he heard continually that fearful Sentence of Christ, that just Judge, that he knew he was utterly undone; that he could neither hope for Grace, nor Christs intercession with God the Father in his behalf: thus was his fault ever heavy on his heart, and ever his judgement before his eyes.

Now began his Friends, some of them, to repent too late of their rash Counsel: others not looking so high as the Judgement of God, laid all the blame upon his Melancholick constitution; that overshadowing his Judgement wrought in him a kind of madness: every one censured as his fantasie led him, yet for remedy all agreed in this, to use both the wholsom help of Physitians, and the pious advice of Divines, and therefore thought it meet to convey him to *Padua*, an University of note, where plenty of all manner of meane was to be had, this they accordingly did, both with his Wife, Children, and whole Family, others also of his Friends accompanying him: and being arrived at the house of one *James Ardin*, in Saint *Leonards* Parish, they sent for three Physitians of most note, who upon due observation of the effects, and of other symptomes of his disease, and some private conference one with another, amongst themselves, returned their verdict in this manner, *viz.* That they could not discern that his body was afflicted with any danger or

distemper

distemper Originally from it self, by reason of the over ruling of any humour: but that this Malady of his did arise from some grief or passion of his mind, which being over burdened, did oppress the spirits, as they wanting free passage stirred up many ill humours, wherof the body of Man is full: and these ascending up into the brain, troubled the fantasie, shadowed the seat of the judgement, and so corrupted it. This was the state of his Disease, and that outward part that was visible to the eye of nature: this they endeavoured to reform by Purgation, either to consume, or at least to divert the course of those Humors from the brain: but all their skill effected nothing, which *Spira* noting said,

Alas poor Men! how far wide are you? do you think that this Disease is to be cured by Potions? believe me there must be another manner of Medicine: it is neither Plaister, *nor* Drugs, *that can help a* fainting Soul, cast down with the sense of sin, and wrath of God: 'tis only Christ that must be the Physitian, and the Gospel the Souls Antidote.

The Physitians easily believed him, after they had understood the whole Truth of the matter, and therefore they wished him to seek some Spiritual comfort. By this time the fame of this man was spread over all *Padua*, and the neighbour Countrey: partly for

for that he was a man of esteem: partly because as the disease, so the occasion was especially remarkable; for this was not done in a corner: so as daily there came multitudes of all sorts to see him, some out of curiosity, only to see and discourse, some out of a pious desire to try all means that might reduce him to comfort again: or at least to benefit themselves by such a spectacle of misery, and of the justice of God. Amongst these *Paulus Vergerius* Bishop of *Justinopolis* and *Matthæus Gribaudus*, deserve especially to be named as the most principal Labourers for this mans comfort. They find him now about fifty years of age, neither affected with the dotage of old age, nor with the unconstant headstrong passion of youth, but in the strength of his experience and judgement: in a burning heat, calling excessively for drink, yet his understanding active, quick of apprehension, witty in discourse above his ordinary manner, and judiciously opposite: his Friends laboured with him by all fair means to receive some nourishment, which he obstinately gain saying, they forcibly infused some liquid sustenance into his mouth, most of which he spit out again, exceedingly chafing, and in this fretting mood of his, said:

'As it is true, that all things work for the 'best to those that love God, *so to the wicked all*

'are

are contrary: for whereas a plentiful offspring is the blessing of God, and his reward being a stay to the weak estate of their aged Parents, to me they are a cause of bitterness and vexation, they do strive to make me tire out this misery: I would fain be at an end, I deserve not this dealing at their hands: Oh! that I were gone from hence, that some body would let out this weary Soul.

His Friends saluted him, and asked him, what he conceived to be the cause of his disease: forthwith he brake out into a lamentable discourse of the passages formerly related, and that with such passionate Elocution, that he caused many to weep, and many to tremble. They contrarily, to comfort him, propounded many of Gods promises recorded in the Scripture, and many Examples of Gods mercy.

'My sin (*said he*) is greater than the mercy of God.

Nay, answered they, the mercy of God is above all sin: God would have all men to be saved:

'Its true (*quoth he*) he would have all that he hath Elected to be saved: he would not have damned Reprobates to be saved: I am one of that number, I know it, for I willingly and against my knowledge denied Christ, and I feel that he hardens, and will not suffer me to hope.

After

After ſome ſilence, one aſked him whether he did not believe that Doctrine to be true, for which he was accuſed before the *Legat*? He anſwered;

I did believe it, when I denied it: but now I neither believe that, nor the Doctrine of the Roman Church: I believe nothing: I have no Faith no truſt, no hope: I am a Reprobate like Cain or Judas, who caſting away all hope of mercy, fell into deſpair: and my Friends do me great wrong, that they ſuffer me not to go to the place of Unbelievers, as I juſtly deſerve.

Here they began ſharply to rebuke him; requiring, and charging him, that in any wiſe he did not violate the mercy of God; to which he anſwered,

'The mercy of God is exceeding large, and 'extends to all the Elect, but not to me or any 'like to me, who are ſealed up to wrath: I 'tell you I deſerve it, my own Conſcience con-'demns me, what needeth any other judge?

Chriſt came (ſaid they) to take away ſin, *Rom.* 2. 15 and calling for a Book, they read unto him the paſſion of Chriſt: and coming to his nailing to the Croſs, *Spira* ſaid, 'This 'indeed is comfortable to ſuch as are Elected, 'but as for me Wretch, they are nothing but 'grief & torment, becauſe I contemned them.

Thus roaring for grief, and toſſing himſelf up and down upon the bed as he lay, he intreated

treated them to read no more. As *Gribauldus* was coming to see him, *Vergerius* said to *Spira*, dear Sir, here is Doctor *Gribauldus*, a godly and faithful friend of yours, come to see you. 'He is welcome (said he) but he shall find 'me ill: *Gribaulaus* replied, Sir, this is but an illusion of the Devil, who doth what he can to vex you; but turn you to God with your whole heart, and he is ready to shew you mercy: the Lord you know is full of mercy, it is he that hath said, that as *often as a sinner repents of his sin, he will remember his sins no more:* Consider this in the Example of *Peter*, that was Christs familiar, and an Apostle, and yet denied him thrice with an Oath, and yet God was merciful unto him: Consider the Thief that spent his whole life in wickedness, and for all that, did not God graciously respect him in the last minute of his life? Is the Lords hand now shortned that it cannot save? To this *Spira* Answered:

'If *Peter* grieved and repented, it was be'cause Christ beheld him with a merciful eye: 'and in that he was pardoned, it was not be'cause he wept, but because God was gracious 'to him: but God respects not me, and there'fore I am a Reprobate: I feel no comfort can 'enter into my heart; there's place there only 'for torments and vexings of spirit; I tell you 'my case is properly mine own, no man was

'ever

'ever in the like plight, and therefore my e-
'ſta e is fearful.

Then roaring out in the bitteneſs of his ſpirit, ſaid, *It's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*: the violence of his paſſion and action ſuitable, did amaze many of the Beholders; inſomuch as ſome of them ſaid with a whiſpering voice, that he was poſſeſſed; he over hearing it, ſaid,

'Do you doubt it? I have a whole Legion
'of Devils that take up their dwelling within
'me, and poſſeſs me as their own, and juſtly too, for I have denied Chriſt. Whether did you that willingly or not? (ſaid they,)
'That's nothing to the purpoſe (ſaid *Spira*,)
'Chriſt ſaith, Whoſoever denies me before
'men, him will I deny before my Father which
'is in Heaven. Chriſt will not be denied, no
'not in a word, and therefore is is enough,
'though in heart I never denied him.

They obſerving his diſtemper to ariſe from the ſenſe and horror of the pains of Hell, asked him whether he thought there were worſe pains than what he endured for the preſent?

He ſaid, 'That he knew that there were far
'worſe pains than thoſe that he then ſuffered,
'for the wicked ſhall riſe to their judgement,
'but they ſhall not ſtand in judgement, (*Pſal.* 1.) this I tremble to think of, yet do I deſire
'nothing more, then that I might come to that
'place

'place I where may be sure to feel the worst,
'and to be freed from fear of worse to come.

I, but you are to consider (said one) that those Opinions for which you were accused before the *Legat*, were impious, and therefore you are not to think you denied Christ, but rather that you confessed him, acknowledging the infallible Truth of the Catholick Church. 'Truly (said he) when I did deny 'those Opinions, I did think them to be true, 'and yet I did deny them.

Go to (said others) now then believe that they are true. 'Now I cannot (said he) God 'will not suffer me to believe them, nor trust 'in his mercy; what would you have me to 'do? I would fain attain to this power, but 'cannot, though I should be presently burnt 'for it. But why do you, said the other, esteem this so grievous a sin, whenas the learned *Legat* constrained you to it; which he surely would not have done, if your former Opinions had not been erroneous: No, good *Francis*, the Devil besets thee, let not therefore the grievousness of thy sin (if any such be) amaze thee. You say right (replied he) 'the Devil hath possest me, and God hath left 'me to his power: for I find I can neither be-'lieve the Gospel, nor trust in Gods mercy. 'I have sinned against the Holy Ghost, and 'God by his immutable decree hath bound me

'over to perpetual punishment without any
'hope of pardon. Its true, that the great-
'ness of sin, nor the multitude of them, bind
'not Gods mercy; all those sins that in the
'former part of my life I have committed,
'then did not so much trouble me, for I trust-
'ed God would not lay them to my charge:
'now having sinn'd against the Holy Ghost,
'God hath taken away from me all power of
'Repentance, and brings all my sins to remem-
'brance; and guilty of one guilty of all.
'And therefore its no matter whether my sins
'be great or small, few or many, they be such
'as Christs blood nor Gods mercy belongs to
'me. God will have mercy on whom he will
'have mercy: and whom he will he harden-
'eth; this is it that gnaws my heart, he hath
'hardned me, and I find that he daily more and
'more doth harden me, and therefore I am
'out of hope; I feel it, therefore cannot but
'despair. I tell you, there was never such a
'Monster as I am, never was any man alive a
'spectacle of exceeding misery. I knew that
'justification is to be expected by Christ, and I
'denied and abjured it, to the end I might keep
'this frail life from adversity, and my Chil-
'dren from poverty: and now behold how
'bitter this life is to me, and God only knows
'what shall become of this my Family; but
'sure no good is likely to betide it, but worse

'and

and worſe, and ſuch a ruine at length, as one ſtone ſhall not be left upon another. But why ſhould you (ſaid *Gribauldus*) conceit ſo deeply of your ſin, ſeeing you cannot but know that many have denied Chriſt yet never fell into deſpair? Well (ſaid he) I can ſee no ground of comfort for ſuch, neither can I warrant them from Gods revenging hand in wrath, though it pleaſeth God yet to ſuffer ſuch to be in peace: & beſides there will a time of danger come, and then they ſhall be throughly tried; and if it were not ſo, yet God is juſt in making me an example to others, and I cannot juſtly complain; there is no puniſhment ſo great, but I have deſerved it, for this ſo heinous offence. I aſſure you it is no ſmall matter to deny Chriſt, and yet it is more ordinary than commonly men do conceive of; it is not a denial made before a Magiſtrate, as it is with me; for as often as a Chriſtian doth diſſemble the known truth, as often as he approves of falſe worſhip, by preſenting himſelf at it; ſo often as he hath not things worthy of his calling ſo often he denies Chriſt; thus did I, & therefore am juſtly puniſhed for it. Your eſtate (quoth *Gribauldus*) is not ſo ſtrange as you make it. *Job* was ſo far gone, that he complained God had ſet him as a mark againſt him; and *David* that was a man after Gods own heart, complained often that God had forſaken him, and was become his enemy, yet both received comfort again. Com-

fort your ſelf therefore, God will come at length, though he now ſeem far off.

O Brother (*anſwered* Spira) *I believe all this, the Devils believe and tremble; but* David *was ever Elected, and dearly beloved of God; and though he fell, yet God took not utterly away his holy Spirit, and therefore was heard when he prayed,* Lord take not thy Holy Spirit from me: *but I am in another caſe, being ever accurſed from the preſence of God; neither can I pray as he did, becauſe his Holy Spirit is quite gone, and cannot be recalled; and therefore I know I ſhall live in continual hardneſs ſo long as I live, Oh that I might feel but the leaſt ſenſe of the love of God to me, though but for one ſmall moment, as I now feel his heavy wrath that burns like the torments of Hell within me, and afflicts my conſcience with pangs unutterable: verily Deſperation is Hell it ſelf.*

Here *Gribauldus* ſaid, I do verily believe, *Spira*, that God having ſo ſeverely chaſtiſed you in this life, correcteth you in mercy here, that he may ſpare you hereafter, and that he hath mercy ſealed up for you in time to come.

Nay (*ſaid* Spira) *hence do I know that I am a Reprobate, becauſe he afflicteth me with hardneſs of heart: O that my body had ſuffered all my life long, ſo that he would be pleaſed to releaſe my ſoul, and eaſe my Conſcience, this burdened Conſcience.*

Gribauldus being deſirous to eaſe his mind from the continual meditation of his ſins, as alſo to

found

found how for the present he stood effected to the Romish Church, asked him what he thought became of the souls of men so soon as they departed out of the body? to which he answered: *Although this be not so fully revealed in Scripture, yet I verily believe that the souls of the Elect go presently to the Kingdom of glory, and not that they sleep with the body, as some do imagine.*

Very well said one of the Spectators, why do the Scriptures then say, (1 *Sam.* 2 9.) that God brings down to Hell, and raiseth up, seeing it cannot be meant of the estate of the soul after death, which as thou saist either goeth to heaven without change, or to hell without redemption; it must be understood of the estate of the soul in this life, like that wherein thou art at this present: and oftentimes we see that God suffers men to fall into the jaws of despair, and yet raiseth them up again; and therefore despair not, but hope; it shall be even thus with thee in his good time.

This is the work (*quoth* Spira) *this the labour: for I tell you when I at* Venice *did first adjure my Profession, and so, as it were, drew an Indenture, the Spirit of God often admonished me: and when at* Cittadella *I did as it were set to my seal, the spirit of God often suggested to me, do not write* Spira, *do not deal: yet I resisted the Holy Ghost, and did both: and at that very present I did evidently feel a wound inflicted in my very will: so although I can say, I would believe, yet can I not say, I will believe, God hath*

hath denied me the power of will, and it befals me in this my miſerable Eſtate, as with one that is faſt in Irons, and his friends coming to ſee him, do pity his Eſtate, and do perſwade him to ſhake off his fetters, and to come out of his bonds, which God knows he would fain do, but cannot; this is my very caſe, you perſwade me to believe, how fain would I do it, but cannot, O now I cannot. Then violently graſping his hands together, and raiſing himſelf up: *Behold* (ſaid he) *I am ſtrong, yet by little and little I decay and conſume, and my ſervants would fain preſerve this weary life, but at length the will of God muſt be done, and I ſhall periſh miſerably, as I deſerve: Rejoyce ye Righteous in the Lord, bleſſed are you whoſe hearts the Lord hath mollified.*

Then after ſome pauſe, *It's wonderful, I earneſtly deſire to pray to God with my heart, yet I cannot; I ſee my damnation, and I know my remedy is only in Chriſt, yet I cannot ſet my ſelf to take hold on it: ſuch are the puniſhments of the damned; they confeſs what I confeſs, they repent of their loſs of Heaven, they cannot mend their wayes.*

As he was thus ſpeaking, he obſerved divers Flies that came about him, and ſome lighted on him: 'Behold, *ſaid he*, now alſo Beelzebub 'comes to his Banquet; you ſhall ſhortly ſee my 'end, and in me an example to many, of the Ju-'ſtice and Judgement of God.

About this time came in two Biſhops, with divers Scholars of the Univerſity, one of them being

me eing *Paulus Vergerius*, having obſerved *Spira*
laſt ore then any other: being continually conver-
ity nt with him, told him his Eſtate was ſuch as ra-
fet- her ſtood in need of Prayer than Advice; and
ws herefore deſired him to pray with him in the
aſe, ords Prayer: *Spira* conſented, and he began:
it, *Our Father which art in Heaven*] then break-
ſp-ng forth into tears he ſtopped: but they ſaid,
ıp: is well, your grief is a good ſign. I bewail
and ſaid he) my miſery, for I perceive I am forſa-
nld- en of God, and cannot call to him from my
l of eart, as I was wont to do: yet let us go on ſaid
is *Vergerius.*

ſed *Thy Kingdome come*] O Lord, (ſaid *Spira*)
ring me alſo into this Kingdom: I beſeech thee,
ar- hut me not out. Then coming to thoſe words
an- [*Give us this day our daily bread*] he added, O
is Lord, I have enough, and abundance to feed the
l on arcaſs of mine: but there is another bread I
ed; umbly beg, the bread of thy Grace, without
s of which I know I am but a dead man.

Lead us not into Temptation] Seeing Lord,
ers that I am brought into temptation, help me Lord
on that I may eſcape: the enemy hath overcome:
ou help me, I beſeech thee to overcome this cruel
my Tyrant. Theſe things he ſpake with a mournful
Ju- voice, the tears trickling down abundantly, and
expreſſing ſuch affections and paſſion, as turned
di- the bowels of thoſe there preſent with grief and
em compunction; they then turning to *Spira*, ſaid,
ng

You know that none can call *Christ Jesus* the *Lord*, but by the Holy Ghost: you must therefore think of your self, according to that soft affection, which you express in your prayers, inferring thereby that God hath not wholly cast you off, or bereaved you of his Spirit utterly.

I perceive said *Spira*, that I call on him to my eternal damnation; for I tell you again, it is a new and unheard of example, that you find in me. If *Judas* (said they) had but outlived his dayes, which by nature he might have done, he might have repented, and Christ would have received him to mercy; and yet he sinned most grievously against his Master, which did so esteem of him, as to honour him with the dignity of an Apostle, and did maintain and feed him. He answered, Christ did also feed and honour me, neither yet is my fault one jot less then that of his, because it is no more honour to be personally present with Christ in the flesh, than to be in his presence now by illumination of his holy spirit; and besides I deny that ever *Judas* could have repented how long soever he had lived, for Grace was quite taken from him, as it now from me. O *Spira*, said they, you know you are in a spiritual desertion: you must therefore not believe what Satan suggests, he was ever a Liar from the beginning, and a meer Impostor, and will cast a thousand lying fancies into your mind, to beguile you withal: you must rather believe

those

those whom you judge to be in a good estate, and more able to discern of you than your self: believe us, and we tell you that God will be merciful unto you.

O here is the knot (said *Spira*) I would I could believe, but I cannot.

Then he began to reckon up what fearful dreams and visions he was continually troubled with: that he saw the Devils come flocking into the Chamber, and about his Bed, terrifying him with strange noises, that these were not fantasies, but that he saw them as really, as the standers by: and that besides these outward terror, he felt continually a racking torture of his minds and a continual Butchery of his Conscience, being the very proper pangs of the damned wights in Hell.

Cast away these Fantasies (said *Gribaldus*) these are but illusions: humble your self in the presence of God, and praise him. 'The dead 'praise not the Lord (answered he) nor they 'that go down into the pit. We that are drowned 'ed in despair are dead, and already gone down 'into the pit: what Hell can there be worse 'than desperation, or what greater punishment? 'The gnawing Worm, Unquenchable Fire, Horror, Confusion, and (which is worse than all) 'Desperation it self continually tortures 'me, and now I count my present estate worse, than if my soul separated from my

'my body were with *Judas*, and the reſt of the 'damned; and therefore, now deſire rather to 'be there, than thus to live in the body.

One being preſent repeated certain words out of the Pſalms: *If thy Children forſake my Law and walk not in my judgements: I will viſit their tranſgreſſions with rods, and their iniquity with ſtripes: nevertheleſs my loving-kindneſs I will not utterly take from them, nor ſuffer my faithfulneſs to fail.* Mark this O *Spira*, my Covenant I will not break.

Theſe promiſes (ſaid *Spira*) belong only to the Elect, which if tempted, may fall into ſin, but are again lifted up and recovered out: as the Prophet ſaith, though he fall he ſhall not be utterly caſt down, for the Lord upholdeth him, therefore *Peter* could riſe, for he was elected: but the Reprobate when they fall, cannot riſe again, as appears in *Can*, *Saul* and *Judas*: God deals one way with the Elect, & another with Reprobates.

The next day he prayed with them in the Latine tongue, and that with excellent affection, as outwardly appeared. Bleſſed be God ſaid *Vergerius*, theſe are no ſigns of eternal Reprobation you muſt not, O *Spira*, ſeek out the ſecret counſels of Gods Election and Reprobation; for no man can know, ſo long as he lives, whether by his good or bad deeds, he be worthy of Gods love or anger: do you not know that the Prophet *David* complained, that God had caſt off his ſoul.

I know

I know all this, quoth Spira, *I know the mercies of God are infinite, and do ſurpaſs the ſins of the whole world, and that they are effectual to all that believe, but this faith, and this hope is the gift of God: O that he would give it me! but it is as impoſſible as to drink up the Sea at a draught: as for that of* Solomon, *if he had ever taſted what I feel by woful experience, he would never have ſpoken as he did: but the truth is, never had mortal man ſuch an evident experience of Gods anger and hatred againſt him, as I have. You that are in good eſtate, think repentance and faith to be work of great facility: and therefore you think it an eaſie matter to perſwade a man to believe: the whole need not the Phyſitian, and he that is well can ſoon give counſel to ſuch as are ill: but this is the hell to me, my heart is hardned, I cannot believe: many are called but few are choſen.*

Upon what ground (ſaid they) do you conceive ſo ill an opinion of your ſelf.

'I once did know God to be my Father, not 'only by Creation, but by Regeneration: *I* 'knew him by his beloved Son, the Author and 'Finiſher of our Salvation: *I* could pray to him, 'and hope for pardon of ſins from him: *I* had a 'taſte of his ſweetneſs, peace and comfort; now 'contrarily, *I* know God not as a Father, but as 'an Enemy: what more? my heart hates God 'and ſeeks to get above him, *I* have nothing elſe 'to flie to but terror and deſpair.

Belike

Belike you think then (said they) that those who have the earnest and first fruits of Gods Spirit, may notwithstanding fall away.

The judgements of God are a deep abyss, said he, we are soon drowned if we enter into them: He that thinks he standeth, let him take heed lest he fall; as for my self, I know I am fallen back, and that I once did know the truth, though it may be not so throughly: I know not what to say, but that I am one of that number which God hath threatned to tear in pieces.

Say not so, answered they, for God may come though at the last hour: keep hold therefore, at the least thy hope.

This, quoth he, is my case; I tell you I cannot, God hath deprived me of hope, this brings terror to my mind, and pines this body which now is so weak, as it cannot perform the several Offices thereof: for as the Elect have the Spirit testifying that they are the Sons of God, so the Reprobates, even while they live, do often feel a Worm in their Consciences, whereby they are condemned already: and therefore as I perceived this wound inflicted on my mind and will, I knew that I wanted the gifts of saving grace, and that I was utterly undone. God chasteneth his Children with temporary afflictions, that they may come as gold out of the fire: but punisheth the wicked with blindness in their understandings and hardness of heart, and wo be to such from whom God takes his holy spirit. Here

Here one rebuked him, and told him he gave too much credit to sense, that he was not to believe himself, but rather him that was in a good estate, and I testified to you (said he) that God will be merciful to you.

Nay, (answered he) *for because I am in this ill estate, therefore can I believe nothing but what is contrary to my salvation and comfort: but you that are so confident of your good estate, look that it be true, for it is no such small matter to be assured of sincerity: a man had need be exceeding strongly grounded in the truth, before he can be able to affirm such a matter as you now do. It is not the performance of a few outward duties, but a mighty constant labour, with all intention of heart and affection, with full desire and endeavour continually to set forth Gods glory; there must be neither fear of Legaters, Inquisitors, Prisons, nor any death whatsoever: many think themselves happy, that are not: it is not every one that saith Lord, Lord, that shall go to Heaven.*

They came another day, and found him with his eyes shut, as if he had been drowzie and very loath to Discourse; at which time there came in also a grave Man from *Cittadella*, who demanded of *Spira*, if he knew him or not. He lifting up his eye-lids, and not suddenly remembring him, the man said to him, I *am Presbyter Antonie Fontamia*, I was with you at *Venice* some eight weeks since: 'O Cursed day, said *Spira*!' Oh cursed day! Oh that I had

'never gone thither! would God *I* had then died!'

Afterwards came in a Prieſt, called *Bernardinus Saraonius*, bringing with him a Book of Exorciſms to conjure this Devil, whom when *Spira* ſaw, ſhaking his head, he ſaid:

'*I* am verily perſwaded indeed, that God 'hath left me to the power of the Devil: but 'ſuch they are, as are not to be found in your 'Letany, neither will they be caſt out by Spells. The Prieſt proceeding in his intended purpoſe, with a ſtrange uncouth geſture, and a loud voice, adjured the Spirit to come into *Spira*'s tongue, and to anſwer: *Spira* deriding his fruitleſs labour, with a ſigh, turned from him: a Biſhop being there preſent, ſaid to *Spira*, Brother, God hath put vertue into the Word and Sacraments: and we have uſed the one means, and find not that effect which we deſire: ſhall we try the efficacy of the Sacraments? ſurely if you take it, as a true Chriſtian ought to receive the body and blood of Chriſt, it will prove a ſovereign medicine for your ſick ſoul.

'This *I* cannot do (anſwered he) for they 'that have no right to the promiſes, have no right 'to the ſeals. The Euchariſt was appointed only 'for Believers, if we have not faith, we eat and 'drink judgement to our ſelves: *I* received it 'about a month ſince, but *I* did not well in ſo 'doing, for *I* took it by conſtraint, and ſo *I* 'took it to my deeper condemnation.

Here

Here *Vergerius* began to importune him earneſtly to beware that he did not wilfully to reſiſt grace, and put himſelf out of Heaven, charging him vehemently, by all the love that was between them, by the love that he bare to his Children, yea to his own Soul, that he would ſet himſelf ſeriouſly to return to that Faith and Hope, which once he had in the death of Chriſt; with many ſuch like words. *Spira* having heard much of the like matter formerly, and being ſomewhat moved, ſaid, You do but repeat, *Vergerius*, what ſhould *I* hope? why ſhould *I* believe? God hath taken Faith from me, ſhew me then whither *I* ſhall go, ſhew me a Haven whereto *I* ſhall retire. You tell me of Gods mercy, when as God hath caſt me off: you tell me of Chriſts interceſſion, *I* have denied him: you command me to believe *I* ſay *I* cannot, you bring me no comfort, your command is as impoſſible for me to obey as to keep Moral Law: if you ſhould perſwade one to love God with all his heart, ſoul, ſtrength, and God gives him no power, can he perform your deſire? Doth not the Church teach us to ſing, *Direct us, O Lord, to love thy Commandments? Hypocrites ſay that they love God with all their heart, but they lie: for my part I will not lie, but tell you plainly, Such is my caſe, that though you ſhould never ſo much importune me to hope or believe, though I deſire it yet I cannot, for God as a puniſhment of my wickedneſs, hath taken away from me*

all

all his saving Graces, faith hope, and all: I am not the man therefore that you take me for: belike you think I delight in this estate, if I could conceive but the least spark of hope of a better estate hereafter, I would not refuse to endure the most heavy waight of the wrath of that great God; yea, for twenty thousand years, so that I might at length attain to the end of this misery, which I know will be eternal. But I tell you, my will is wound, who longs more to believe then I do? but all the ground-work of hope is gone, for if the testimonies of Holy Scripture be true (as they are certainly true) is not this as true, whosoever denies me before men, him saith *Christ*, will I deny before my Father which is in Heaven? is not this justly my case, as if it had been intended against this very person of mine? and I pray you what shall become of such as Christ denieth, seeing there is no other name under Heaven whereby you look to be saved? what saith St. *Paul* to the *Hebrews?* It is impossible for those who were once enlightned and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were partakers of the Holy Ghost, if they fall away, to be renewed to repentance; what can be more plain against me? is not that Scripture also; if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin but a looking for of judgement: the Scripture speaks of me, St. *Paul* meets me, St. *Peter* tells me it had been better I had never

known the way of Righteousness, then after I have known, to turn from the holy Commandments, it had been better I had not known, and yet then my condemnation had been most certain; do you not see evidently, that I have wilfully denied the known truth; I may justly expect not only Damnation, but worse, if worse may be imagined, God will have me undergo the just punishment of my sin, and make me an example of his wrath for your sakes.

The Company present admired his discourse, so grievously accusing himself of his fore-past life, so gravely and wisely dilating concerning the judgements of God, that they then were convinced, that it was not Frenzy or Madness that had possessed him, and being as it were in admiration of his Estate, *Spira* proceeded again in this manner. 'Take heed to your selves, it is 'no light or easie matter to be a Christian: it is 'not Baptisme or reading of the Scriptures, or 'boasting of Faith in Christ, (though even those 'are good) that can prove one to be an absolute 'Christian: you know what I said before, there 'must be a conformity in life. A Christian must 'be strong, unconquerable, not carrying an obscure profession, but resolute, expressing the Image of Christ, and holding out against all opposition to the last breath, he must give all diligence, by Righteousness and Holiness, to make his Calling and Election sure. Many there are

that ſnatch at the Promiſes in the Goſpel, as if they undoubtedly did belong to them, and yet they remain ſluggiſh, and careleſs: and being flattered by the things of this preſent World, they paſs in their courſe in quietneſs and ſecurity as if they were the only happy men, whom nevertheleſs the Lord in his providence hath ordained to eternal wrath, as you may ſee in Saint *Lukes* Rich Man Thus it was with me, therefore take ye heed.

Then came one of his Nephews and offered him ſome ſuſtenance, which he diſdainfully refuſing, ſo moved the young mans chollar, that he charged him with Hypocriſie and diſſimulation, or frenzy: to whom *Spira* gravely anſwering, ſaid, You may interpret the matter as you will: but I am ſure I am not only the Actor, but the Argument and matter of the Tragedy: I would it were frenzy either feigned or true for if it were frenzy I could put it off at pleaſure: if it were real frenzy, yet there were ſome hope left of Gods mercy, whereas now there is none. *For I know God hath pronounced me an Enemy, and guilty of high Treaſon againſt his Majeſty; I am a caſtaway, a veſſel of wrath, yet dare you call it diſſembling and frenzy? and can you mock at the formidable example of the heavy wrath of God, that ſhould teach you fear and terror: But it is natural to the fleſh, either out of malice or ignorance, to ſpeak perverſly of the works of God. The natural*

man diſcerneth not the things that be of God, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.

How can this be (ſaid *Gribaldus*) that you can thus excellently diſcourſe of the judgements of God, and of the Graces of his Holy Spirit, that you find the want of them, and earneſtly deſire them and yet you think you are utterly deprived of them.

Take this for certain (ſaith he) *want the main grace of all, and that which is abſolutely neceſſary, and God doth many times exhort moſt true & ſtrange teſtimonies of his Majeſty, Juſtice and Mercy: yea, out of the mouthes of very Reprobates: for even* Judas, *after he had betrayed his Maſter, was conſtrained to confeſs his ſin, and to juſtifie the innocency of Chriſt: and therefore if I do the like, it is no new or ſtrange matter. God hath taken Faith from me, and left me other common gifts, for my deeper condemnation: By how much the more I remember what I had, and hear others Diſcourſe of what they have, by ſo much the more is my torment, in that I know what I want, and how there is no way to be relieved.*

Thus ſpake he, the tears all the while trickling down: profeſſing that his pangs were ſuch, as that the damned Wights in Hell endure not the like miſery: that his eſtate was worſe than that of *Cain* or *Judas*, and therefore he deſired to die. *Yet behold* (ſaith he) *the Scriptures are accompliſhed in me, They ſhall deſire to die, and death*

ſhall flie from them. And verily, he ſeemed exceedingly to fear, leſt his life ſhould be drawn out to a longer thred: and finding no eaſe or reſt ever and anon, cried out, *O miſerable wretch, O miſerable Wretch*: then turning to the Company, he beſought them in this manner.

O Brethren! take a diligent heed to your life: make more account of the gifts of Gods Spirit than I have done: learn to beware of my miſery: think not you are aſſured Chriſtians, becauſe you underſtand ſomething of the Goſpel: take heed you grow not ſecure on that ground; be conſtant and immovable in the maintenance of your Profeſſion: Conſeſs even until death, if you be called thereto: he that loveth Father, Mother, Brothers, Siſters, Sons, Daughters, Kindred, Houſes, Lands, more then Chriſt, is not worthy of him. Theſe words (ſaid they) do not ſound like the words of a wicked Reprobate.

'I do but here imitate, (ſaith *Spira*) the Rich 'Glutton in the Goſpel, who though in Hell, yet 'was careful that his Brethren ſhould not come 'to that place of torment: and ſay to you Bre'thren, take heed of this miſerable eſtate where'in I am.

Then turning himſelf to certain young men that were preſent, he deſired them to conceive him aright. 'I do not ſpeak this to derogate 'from the certainty of ſaving faith, and the pro'miſes of the Goſpel, for they are moſt ſure: but

'but take heed of relying on that Faith that 'works not a holy and unblameable life, worthy 'of a Believer; credit me it will fail, I have tri-'ed it, I presumed I had gotten the 'right faith; I preached it to others, I had all 'places of Scripture in memory that might sup-'port it, *I* thought my self sure, and in the mean 'time living impiously and carelesly, behold now 'the judgement of God hath overtaken me, not 'to correction, but to condemnation: And now 'you would have me to believe, but it will not 'be, for *I* feel too late that good things belong 'only to such as are good, whose sins are covered 'with Christs death and blood, as with a vail, 'and guarded with his righteous merits from 'the flood of Gods wrath, even as with a mighty 'Wall, lest miserable Mortals should be swal-'lowed up with greatness of their Sin: but as 'for me, *I* have as it were, wilfully with my 'hands pulled down this Rampire, behind which '*I* might have rested in safety, and now are the 'swelling Waters come even to my soul, and *I* 'am cast away. One of his familiar Friends chanced to say, that certainly he was overcome with Melancholly; which being over-heard, *Spira* answered;

Well, be it so, seeing you would needs have it so: thus also is Gods wrath manifested against me, in that he hath taken from me the use of mine Understanding and Reason; so as *I* can neither rightly

rightly eſteem and judge of my diſtemper, nor hope of remedy. You ſee Brethren, what a dangerous thing it is to ſtop or ſtay in things that concern Gods Glory, eſpecially to diſſemble upon any terms: What a fearful thing is it to be near and almoſt a Chriſtian? never was the like example to this of mine, and therefore if you be wiſe, you will ſeriouſly conſider thereof. O that God would let looſe his hand from me, that it were with me now as in times paſt, *I* would ſcorn the threats of the moſt cruel Tyrants, bear torments with invincible reſolution, and glory in the outward profeſſion of Chriſt, till I were choaked in the flame, and my body conſumed to aſhes.

You ſay, you are deſperate, O *Spira*! (ſaid they) why then do you not ſtrive with ſome weapon or other, violently to make an end of your life, as deſperate men uſe to do? *Let me have a Sword* (ſaid *Spira:*) Why what would you do with it? (ſaid they) *I cannot tell you* (ſaid he) *what this mind would move me to, upon occaſion, nor what I would do:*

They perceiving ſmall effect of all this their labour, but rather that he grew worſe, for the avoiding of concourſe of People; for every day ſeldom fewer then twenty continued with him, and to ſtop the courſe of fame which was continually blown abroad of him; they conſult to carry him back again into his own Countrey; and

and those his friends that came to comfort him, began to take their leaves of him, *Vergerius* amongst the rest, required that at their parting they might pray together with him, *Spira* hardly consented, and as unwillingly performed, for he said, 'My heart is estranged from God, I cannot call him Father from my heart, all good 'motions are now quite gone, my heart is full of 'malediction, hatred, and blasphemy against 'God: *I* find *I* grow more and more hardned 'in heart, and cannot stoop nor help my self: 'your Prayers for me shall turn to your own 'benefit, they can do me no good.

Vergerius came to take his leave of him, whom *Spira* embracing, said, 'Although *I* know that 'nothing can bring any benefit to me a Reprobate, but that every thing shall tend to my 'deeper condemnation: yet I give you most hearty thanks for your kind office of love and good 'will; and the Lord return it unto you, with a 'plentiful increase of all good.

The next day being brought down to his intended Journey, by the way looking round about him with a ghastly look, he saw a knife lying on a Table, to which he running hastily, snatched hold of it, as intending to mischief himself: but his friends laying hold of him, stopped him in his purpose: whereupon with indignation, he said, *I would I were above God, for I know he will have no mercy on me.*

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Thus went he homewards, often saying, that he envied the condition of *Cain* and *Judas*: He lay, about eight weeks in this case, in a continual burning, neither desiring, nor receiving any thing but by force, and that without digestion, so spent that he appeared a perfect Anatomie, expressing to the view nothing but sinews and bones: vehemently raging for Drink, ever pining, yet fearful to live long; dreadful of Hell yet coveting death: in a continual Torment, yet his own Tormentor. And thus consuming himself with grief and horror, impatience and despair, like a living man in Hell: He represented an extraordinary example of the justice and power of God.

And thus (as far as appeareth) within a few dayes after his arrival at his own home, he departed this present life. Yet an occasion to make us remember, *That secret things belong unto the Lord our God*, but Charity to Man; to teach him to hope all things.

FINIS.